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ABSTRACT

A survey of 13 small colleges indicated that there was limited communication between students and faculty outside class and limited thought and exchange of ideas in class despite the fact that American undergraduates today are better prepared, more complex, more sophisticated, and more autonomous than ever before. These students need frequent opportunities for communication, open debate and widespread involvement, but these conditions do not prevail at most colleges and universities. Exchange increases and the dimension of discussion expands only when students perceive teaching and curriculum as relevant to their concerns and backgrounds. Outside the classroom student-faculty relationships should be based on accessibility, authenticity, honesty, knowledge, understanding, and the ability to talk with, not at each other. The report recommends that campuses redirect energies toward achieving these goals. A 15 page study of college dropouts is appended. (AF)

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Student-Faculty Relationships Bedrock for College Governance[1]

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Everybody knows that student-faculty relationships reach their apex of warmth and conviviality in the small college. Pick a catalog off the shelf; "One of the chief advantages of the small college lies in its wealth of teacher-student contacts. There are many opportunities for informal discussion and exchange between the faculty and the students. Each student is assigned to a faculty member with whom he counsels during the semester." Scan another: "Many faculty members live near the campus and use their homes frequently for social or academic enterprises with students. The friendly inter-relationship of faculty with students outside the classroom is viewed as one of the most important aspects of life here."

Fortunately we don't have to rely solely on college catalogs for evidence. We can look at more direct findings concerning the daily experiences and behaviors of faculty, administration, and students at such institutions. With the help of thirteen colleges around the country--all with enrollments under 1500--the Project on Student Development in Small Colleges did just that. As part of a longitudinal research and action program the Experience of College Questionnaire (ECQ) was administered to samples of 150-200 students, selected randomly from all four grade levels to reflect class size and sex distributions. The ECQ covered several areas but here we report only a few of the figures concerning student-faculty relationships. And to be economical and clear we report them for only four of the thirteen institutions, four which span the range of findings for the rest.

What did we find? In a nutshell, we found limited communication outside of class and limited thought and exchange of ideas in class. Let's see what "limited" means.

We asked, "With how many individual members of the faculty or administration have you had conversations lasting more than five minutes during the present semester?" And we asked how many conversations there had been. Here is what we found. At two traditional liberal arts colleges--Elder, an old elite institution, and Savior, a small conservative church related college--roughly 80% of the students had conversations with five, or less than five members of the faculty or administration. At Classic, which has a highly structured curriculum like the old University of Chicago model, about 60% talk with five or less, and at Kildew, an experimental, student centered institution with no required courses, written and oral self-evaluations instead of exams, much independent study, and faculty counselors, the figure is about 45%. At Elder and Savior 55-70% indicate six or less conversations; Classic and Kildew again do somewhat better with figures of 30-40%. The same percentages indicated two or fewer special occasions during the

HE 001 454

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[1]The research reported here comes from the Project on Student Development in Small Colleges, NIMH Grant #MH14780-05. This article is a revised version of comments addressed to the Fifteenth Annual Institute on College and University Administration, University of Michigan, June, 1969.

semester--out-of-class activity groups, meals, social gatherings--where they conversed with faculty members or administrators.

Note that the four colleges maintain a consistent relationship to one another. This relationship holds throughout our data. Elder and Savior, despite dramatic differences in reputation, in plant, in faculty salaries, and in financial resources, look very much alike. Classic and Kildew differ from them in reflecting higher levels of contact, and differ from each other giving Kildew a consistently higher rate. Most of the other Project colleges look more like Elder and Savior than like Classic or Kildew.

In addition to inquiring about the number of different faculty members and the number of conversations, we asked how much time during the semester was spent discussing different topics with members of the faculty or administration. We found that at all the colleges except Kildew 90-95% of the students spend one half hour or less talking about formal academic assignments, future educational and vocational plans, or problems of personal concern. Forty to sixty percent spend no time at all talking about such topics with members of the faculty and administration. At Kildew not much time is spent discussing formal academic assignments because there aren't very many; more time is spent on educational and vocational plans, and substantially more on problems of personal concern. But even at Kildew, where 20-30% spend no time on future plans or personal problems, the figures leave substantial room for improvement. We asked a similar question concerning general topics in the academic field, campus events, activities, and issues, and other general conversations. At Kildew and Classic there is more discussion of campus events and issues, but 70% spend less than an hour during a full semester, so participatory campus governance has a long way to go.

When we share these findings with the Project colleges, about now someone usually pops up and says, "But what about the advisors? At our college every student has an advisor with whom he discusses his academic program and his future plans for graduate school or work." If you are a fly fisherman you know the keen feeling when that bright trout leaps at the lure. With that same feeling we report that the figures for conversations with the advisor are basically the same. Eighty percent of the students still spend one-half hour or less in such conversations. The only difference is that fewer spend zero time and more spend a few minutes to a half an hour. So we recognize in the data those brief moments it takes for the advisor to sign the program card--and we see, for all but a small minority, very little else.

In the light of the figures presented above, what did students think about the amount of "contact" and "guidance" they had received? Was it "Not enough," "Just about right," "Too much?" At Elder and Savior 50% indicate not enough contact, and 25-30% indicate not enough guidance. At Classic and Kildew the frequencies again are somewhat lower. The higher frequency of dissatisfaction with the amount of contact compared with the amount of guidance is worth noting. Because it is more contact, exchange, interaction, that students most often want--not guidance, exhortation, advice. You may recall the student who said to his professor, "I'd really like your candid opinion of my paper." The professor paused, and said, "Well, frankly, it's not worth much." Whereupon the student replied, "I know it, but I'd like to have it just the same." Most students want to hear the faculty opinions though they may not listen with the reverence and awe we would like.

Point number one therefore--limited communication outside of class! Limited in the range of different faculty members seen, limited in the numbers of conversations, limited in the amount of time spent--even on academic and educational planning, matters central to the purpose of the institution and to the prime function of the faculty. And remember, these are not large universities where publication and consultation are emphasized. They are small colleges, presumably devoted to teaching and to student development.

What about student-faculty relationships in class? We asked students what proportion of their time in two classes was spent in several different activities. We found an interesting dynamic among "Listening and taking notes," "Making statements to the class"--participating in discussions, speeches, formal presentations--and "Doing your own thinking about the ideas being presented." When there is much time spent "Listening and taking notes" and little time spent "Making statements to the class," substantially less time is spent "Doing your own thinking about the ideas presented." At Elder and Savior 60-70% spend more than half their time listening and 75-80% spend less than 5% in class discussion--and only 20% spend more than half their time thinking about the ideas; thirty percent indicate 5% or less time spent thinking about the ideas presented. At Kildew and Classic, where listening and taking notes and participating in discussions is more evenly balanced, twice as much thinking goes on. Of course there's nothing really very new about this finding. Studies comparing lecture and discussion classes have demonstrated the same thing consistently. A student who had decided to leave college put his reaction this way, "In order to be comfortable I have to come to class without any knowledge. Why stay?"

As would be suspected, activities in class are related to activities preparing for class. We asked students about time spent in mental activities studying for courses, using Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives for six alternatives: memorizing, interpreting, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating. At Elder and Savior--where time in class predominantly is spent listening and taking notes--memorizing predominates in class preparation, and little time is given to more complex mental activities. At Classic and Kildew--where there is more balance between listening and taking notes, and participating in discussions, and where doing your own thinking occurs more frequently in class--substantially less time is spent memorizing and complex mental activities receive much more balanced attention.

Day in and day out, class in and class out, what is the message for students at Elder and Savior, and at most of the other small colleges in the Project? The basic message is, "Listen, don't talk.," "Memorize, don't think."

One more set of illustrative data fix that point. How do students experience the role of the teacher and his relationships to students in the course? For 70% of the students at Elder and Savior the teacher runs things and they operate accordingly. He dispenses knowledge for them to master, or he flexibly manages things to help them learn. Only 30% of the students experience more collegial relationships where both teacher and students are learning, or relationships where the teacher is mainly a resource as they pursue their own learning. The figures for Classic and Kildew indicate that it doesn't have to be that way. At Kildew, for example, 80% are either working with the teacher, or using him mainly as a resource for their own learning. All these forces combine to create

dramatic differences in the frequency of open argumentation in class. At Elder and Savior only 25-30% say they sometimes argue openly in class with the instructor or with other students; at Classic and Kildew 65-75% indicate open arguments.

So the condition of limited communication outside of class is not surprising given the principal message coming through the daily classroom encounters--"Listen, Don't Talk, Don't Think, Don't Argue. I serve. You receive." As a student in a recent workshop put it, "I'm tired of, and bored with, being talked at!"

What does it all add up to for a four year period? One person kept track. (Cleaveland, 1965) He reports, "As an undergraduate you receive a four-year-long series of sharp staccatos: eight semesters, forty courses, one hundred and twenty or more units, fifteen hundred to two thousand impersonal lectures, and over three hundred oversized "discussion" meetings. Approaching what is normally associated with learning--reading, writing, and exams--your situation becomes absurd. Over a period of four years you receive close to fifty bibliographies, ranging in length from one to eight pages, you are examined on more than one hundred occasions, and you are expected to write forty to seventy five papers. As you well know, reading means "getting into" hundreds of books, many of which are secondary sources, in a superficial manner. You must cheat to keep up. If you don't cheat you are forced to perform without time to think in depth, and consequently you must hand in papers which are almost as shameful as the ones you've cheated on."

These are the conditions in our colleges. What about the students who encounter them? In general, students entering our institutions are better prepared, more complex, more sophisticated, more autonomous, than ever before--and are becoming increasingly so all the time. Among these the most active students--those whose orientation is characterized by initiative and by attempts to master or modify frustrating conditions, rather than by passivity, submission, conformity, inhibition--the most active are the brighter, more complex, more humanitarian, more creative, more intellectually inclined. They are also the students who are most influenced by adults. Often relationships with their parents are good and parents share their attitudes and values, if not all their methods. They identify with many older teachers, writers, scholars, and call on their views and insights. Further, they are not limited to a narrow cross section. A survey of demonstrators at Berkeley (Lyons, 1965) found that 13% were conservative Republicans and Democrats, 10% liberal Republicans, 48% liberal Democrats, 17% democratic socialists, and only 3% revolutionary socialists. Given the realities of student-faculty relationships and not the myth, and given the diverse background of the active students, it is not surprising that their criticisms and objectives receive widespread support from their less active peers. And it's not surprising that administrative actions which confirm the criticisms and do not recognize legitimate objectives move large numbers of the more passive to action.

What are the implications of all this?

Rensis Likert (1961) and others have described the characteristics of effective organizations. Four salient features are, frequent opportunities for vertical

and lateral communication, an emphasis on rational discourse, close listening to differing views, and a limited gap between expectations and experiences. Our findings suggest that none of these conditions is well met. What changes must occur between students and faculty, in class and out, if college governance is to become more effective and if conditions for education are to improve?

Curriculum and teaching are the heart of formal operations by the college. They absorb most time, energy, and money. They primarily determine the nature of commerce between students and faculty. When curriculum and teaching connect academic studies and classroom activities to pre-existing information, ideas, and attitudes brought by students from their diverse backgrounds, and when students perceive curriculum and teaching as relevant to their concerns, then exchange increases and the dimensions of discussion expand.

"Relevance" is by now a cliche. What do we mean? Relevance can reside in either content or process.

Some content--information, concepts, ideas, insights, fantasies,--speaks to the past and current experiences, problems, and behaviors of students quite directly. Whatever raises social, religious, sexual, moral, or interpersonal conflicts and questions connects sharply with college students. Such issues reside in literature, history, and philosophy, in psychology and other behavioral sciences. Significant existential questions are also powerfully raised by the natural sciences. The Scopes trial was neither the first nor the last time scientific theory and research challenged fundamental belief systems and value frameworks. When Copernicus took man and earth from the center of the universe and sent them spinning around the sun he also sent some basic beliefs into orbit. Gallileo's experimental approach directly challenged the authoritative basis for belief that ruled. Today's discoveries do no less. What is space? What is time? What is reality? What is life? When does it begin? When has death occurred? With whom should such judgements rest? Fundamental questions. Mathematics teaches that initial assumptions can define a system that permits certain solutions but not others, and that several different systems may adequately solve problems--a most powerful lesson.

Process, as distinct from content, refers to those skills, competencies and behaviors by which a person manages himself and his existence, by which he copes with other persons, objects, or events, by which he pursues development important to him. At the simplest and most direct level there are those skills and behaviors relevant to vocational plans and aspirations. Fundamental to this domain, of course, are communication skills and other cognitive abilities--comprehending, applying, synthesizing, analyzing, evaluating.

At more complex levels there are "ego processes" such as those described by Bower (1966): differentiation versus diffusion, fidelity versus distortion, pacing versus over- or under-loading, expansion versus contraction, integration versus fragmentation. There are other more general developmental tasks such as those described by Chickering (1969) and others: managing emotions, freeing interpersonal relationships, developing autonomy, integrity, purpose, identity.

Not that relevance is always clear, obvious, self-evident. The problem--to oversimplify it--is that students usually don't know much about the subject

and teachers don't know much about the students. So connecting the two may not be easy. Actually, however, teachers often know much more about students than they take account of in curriculum development and in course preparation. For many it is more a matter of bringing insights and understandings into play than generating new ones. And some students know enough about the subject to make a start. The basic point, therefore, is not that relevance exists simply for the asking--but if it is pursued, if connections are sought, they usually can be found. When they are, the concepts, theories, hard data, direct experiences, are applied elsewhere more frequently, are retained longer, and expand the network to which other studies and experiences can be associated.

Thus curricular content and experiences which are relevant to students' backgrounds and current concerns, and teaching styles which enable more active exchange between students and faculty and among students, set one cornerstone for more effective governance.

Student-faculty relationships outside of class are another cornerstone. They depend upon four major factors: accessibility, authenticity, knowledge, and the ability to talk with, not at, students.

Accessibility is not satisfied by the typical statement, "Feel free to come and see me." It requires a general climate where talking with faculty members is legitimate, where students do not have to feel guilty about "taking up the professors' valuable time," where such contacts are recognized as an important and necessary part of teaching and learning. Total availability is not necessary, and different students need different amounts of contact. For some, delay or non-assistance is most helpful. Other demands on faculty and administration must be recognized as well. But where the climate legitimizes student-faculty contact outside of class, and where faculty can respond flexibly in terms of their judgements about the significance and timing of requests from individual students, substantial contributions can be made to education and to a constructive basis for governance.

Authenticity reinforces accessibility. Accessibility carries force when full and open persons are encountered. Students don't want to be told what they should be or what they should become, nor does such telling make much difference. But they do want to know what older persons believe and the basis for those beliefs. Logic or empirical evidence are not the only valid or acceptable bases. Candid admission that a belief or principle rests on faith, on a religious or cultural heritage, or on ethical or humanistic assumptions, is far better than intellectual gymnastics using dubious evidence. And if a faculty member can articulate relationships between his family background, his upbringing, and the subsequent experiences which have brought him to where he is, so much the better. What students want, and need, are relationships with authentic persons. When diverse views are represented authentically students will hear them and respect them. They clearly will not agree with all points of view, but from the experience of them they can develop a framework for themselves that has meaning and substance, and that can be the basis for reasoned action, rather than irrational and totalistic identification with passing shibboleths.

Knowledge can be a great help. What should a faculty member or administrator know about students? He need not have the complex level of information

and concepts carried by the psychiatrist or clinical psychologist--indeed the insights from his own experience may often surpass those of the specialist. But he should be familiar with the major developmental concerns of the young adult. He should know something of the social, cultural, economic, spiritual backgrounds from which his students come and their principal attitudes, aspirations, and ideals. Such knowledge need not be acquired through books and courses, though reading can help. It's best acquired through discussion with others on the staff who are more experienced and informed, and through direct conversations with students themselves.

Finally, the ability to talk with and listen to students is not genetically determined. It can be developed. For most students the generation gap is largely a listening gap. We faculty members, convinced of our own good taste and standards, find it very satisfying to give sage advice, to express so lucidly our own well thought through and well substantiated ideas. But after listening to a lecture in class most students are not interested in hearing another one in the office. They do want to express their own ideas and have reactions to them. That process not only helps the student clarify his own thinking; but--and this is its significance for campus governance--it also provides both students and faculty members with more complex and full understandings of each other. With such insights the simplistic instant solutions so often generated from ignorance and distance cannot pass.

To summarize then, the argument basically is this. Effective administration, governance, leadership, rests on effective communication, which in turn requires general institutional conditions of contact, communication, two way exchange, open debate, and widespread involvement. Thirty years of research by Rensis Likert (1961) and many others have documented those principles for many kinds of institutions. The current conditions at our colleges reflect limited contact and communication among students and faculty outside of class, limited thinking and exchange in class and in class preparation. Faculty by their behavior and expectations define a one way relationship that says, "Don't talk, listen; don't think, memorize." Until those conditions are altered effective leadership cannot occur. Helpful changes in curriculum and teaching, and in student-faculty relationships outside of class have been made at some institutions and can be made at others. But on most campuses they do require modification of priorities, shifts of funds, re-direction of energies. The vested interests and powerful rewards for activities other than teaching and talking with students make that shift in priorities no easy task. But that is the problem--let us be clear about that--not that the changes themselves are difficult to conceptualize or complicated to implement given appropriate reallocations of priorities.

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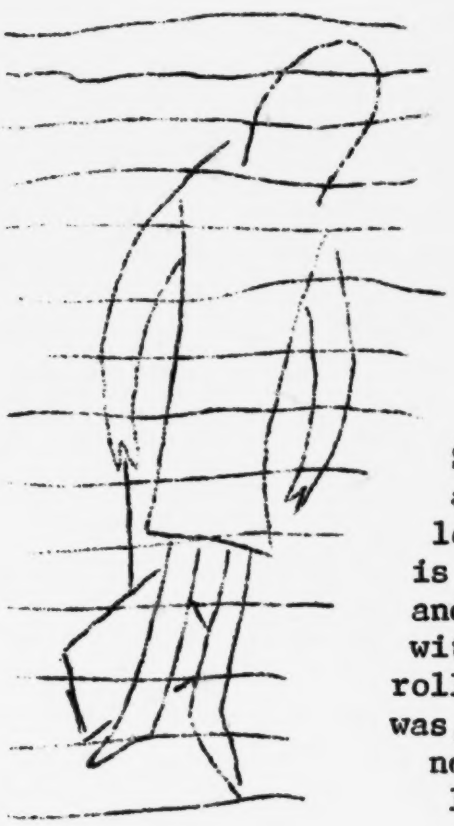
Two "Drop Outs,"--Pat and Chris

This is Patricia, a college "drop out." On the campus and in the classroom, she was probably known by the faculty and friends alike as an average student who liked the college and who was cooperative in observing basic college regulations. She was never under any kind of official censure by the college.

Why did she leave? Her parents moved to another community where a nearby college seemed to offer a similar academic program; tuition was lower there. Faced with the option to remain in the Project college or to transfer to the less costly college, she "talked it over" with friends who urged her to remain. In the end, her obligation to her father's checkbook, supported (we conjecture) by strong parental urgings, overcame all arguments to the contrary. She took the "sensible" route, said goodby to her friends, and left--after two semesters of reasonably successful work. She judged her decision to be "wise" although, said Patricia, "I will always cherish the memory of having studied there."

Other "Patricia's" leave Project colleges because of marriage, change of academic major, and similar straightforward reasons.



This is Christine, also a college "drop out." Although her academic performance was adequate, she had periods of personal illness she described as "emotional." Befor enrolling, she was not sure it was the "right" college, and her experiences there tended to confirm this feeling. She disliked the general atmosphere, was critical of the emphasis placed on religious activities, and her interest in academic matters took a back seat to her desire for marriage. Christine said, in retrospect, "I might have stayed if I had had a steady boyfriend."

She left after two semesters with some uncertainty, anxiousness, disillusionment with herself and with colleges in general, and was angry at society of which college is a part. Although she expressed both academic criticism and personal problems in adjustment, she discussed neither with college officials. Following her withdrawal she enrolled at and subsequently withdrew from another college and was, at last report, employed in clerical work. Christine now regrets not having completed her degree, but college life gave her ". . . too much time to myself."

These two cases, taken from Project files, have certain elements in common: both are females, both withdrew from Project colleges, both transferred to other colleges. For purposes of the Project's "drop out" study, both were classified as female transfers and their scores on various Project instruments were averaged with others of like classification to produce comparisons with other sub-groups (female non-transfers, male transfers, stays, etc.), reports of which have previously been distributed to Project colleges.

But how different these two students are. Patricia's withdrawal seemed rather simple and straightforward; when faced with the decision to stay or leave, she apparently took what was, to her, the "sensible" route. Her college experiences were uncluttered by "internal confusion" and personal problems (at least they were not visible). Although not outstanding, her participation in the life of the college was reasonably successful, pleasant, and personally satisfying.

Christine's case, on the other hand, was marked by some degree of personal doubts, confusion, and instability. Faculty and administrators probably "knew" her but did not "understand" her. By her own admission, her college experiences were not altogether satisfying, and the personal problems she brought with her to college went largely unresolved.

These two cases are neither extreme nor uncommon. Changes in particular details can be made in these case descriptions without injury to the dynamics that separate them. Most withdrawal cases can be covered by one description or the other. Obviously, the two cases illustrated have their male counterparts, Patrick and Christopher, though the differences between them are less clear cut. PAT and CHRIS will hereafter refer to both males and females; when distinctions are necessary, Patrick, Patricia, Christine, and Christopher will be used.

The Attrition Questionnaire, an instrument completed by students following their withdrawal from Project colleges, provided information about how PAT and CHRIS viewed the circumstances that surrounded their withdrawal. Using Questionnaires returned by both male and female withdrawees of four Project colleges (giving us a 25 percent sample of students), students were classified into PAT and CHRIS categories. Then these two sub-groups were compared on the Omnibus Personality Inventory (OPI). The OPI consists of 14 scales designed to measure personality characteristics in such areas as intellectual, socio-religious, and personal orientations. Thus it is a measure of the student as a person, his inner feelings and attitudes, an area where differences between these sub-groups would, we reasoned, be most clearly revealed.

In comparing the PAT and CHRIS sub-groups, it was expected that CHRIS--emotional, anxious, uncertain--would tend to have scale means as distinct (if not more so) as those of the total drop out group of the four colleges when compared to scale means of students remaining in those colleges. Male Stays and Drops did not show the same differences as female Stay and Drop comparisons (please see previous Project reports for a complete description of male-female differences on OPI scales). Suffice it to say at this point that CHRIS scores tended to maintain differences equal in magnitude to Drop scores when compared with Stay scores. Our expectation that CHRIS would be "out group" was thus confirmed.

Furthermore, it was expected that PAT would show OPI scale means not too unlike those earned by students who stayed in college. After all, these withdrawals were largely the result of "external" factors, such as lack of funds, parents moving away, etc. Why should their OPI scores, which reflect inner feelings and attitudes, be different from those who had sufficient funds to continue, whose parents did not move, etc.?

But, to our surprise, scores for PAT were just as "out group" as those of CHRIS; PAT's personality profile was not like those who stayed in college. And neither was it like other leavers. What emerged was a distinct group (see Figures 1 and 2), moreso for women than for men, however. Thus Patricias' mean scores tended to be further from mean scores of stayers, and in opposite direction from Christines'. On the Altruism scale, for example, Patricias' score was two points higher while Christines' was three lower than the mean score for Stays; this divergence held on eight other scales as well. Patrick and Christopher had no such tendency to vary in opposite directions, although both were equally "out group" when compared to stayers.

The numbers of students and the procedures used did not seem to justify checks of statistical significance. However, the numerical differences observed between PAT and CHRIS sub-groups on OPI scales were sufficient to pique our curiosity. To define more sharply the dimensions of our newly found sub-groups, the focus was narrowed to four OPI scales: Impulse Expression (IE), Complexity (Co), Autonomy (Au), and Personal Integration (PI). These scales are particularly helpful in understanding how a student might approach decision-making situations. In terms of these four scales, the differences found were these:

Patricia	Christine
Tends to have a <u>less</u> active imagination, <u>more</u> inhibition, and <u>more</u> control over sensual urgings than is true for the typical female student who stays in college.	Tends to have a <u>more</u> active imagination, <u>more</u> responsive to sensual urgings, and has <u>more</u> overtones of fantasy than the typical female student who stays in college.
Tends to favor <u>simplicity</u> of thought and experience.	Tends to be <u>more</u> tolerant of ambiguity and uncertainty.
Tends to be <u>dependent</u> and conservative.	Tends to be <u>independent</u>.
Tends to admit to <u>less</u> anxiety, disturbance, and alienation.	Tends to avoid others and to express hostility and aggressiveness.

Patrick	Christopher
Tends to have a more active imagination and responsiveness to impulse than is true for the typical male student who stays in college.	Same as Patrick.
Preference for simplicity vs complexity is about average.	Same as Patrick.
Tends to be dependent and conservative.	Tends to be independent.
Tends to admit to some anxiety and disturbance, but not very much.	Tends to avoid others and to express hostility and aggressiveness.

It could be argued that "desirable qualities" for effective learning would be those of an active imagination (strong IE score), a capacity to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty (strong CO score), a capacity for independent thought and judgment (strong AU score), and few, (if any) attitudes that characterize the anxious, disturbed or socially alienated person (strong PI score). While data on groups of students do not describe particular individuals within the groups, what we see in the response patterns of these two sub-groups (see Figures 3 and 4) indicates that neither PAT nor CHRIS possess all the "desirable qualities" listed above.

What we do see is that CHRIS has the active imagination, the willingness to experiment, and the independence--but lacks "personal integration." In other words, CHRIS is "hung up" and may be "up tight."

Conversely, PAT has the personal integration but tends to lack autonomy and leans toward dependency on the authoritarian leadership of respected persons. Patricia is not blessed with an active imagination although Patrick is; she is not overly curious or experimental, and he is just average.

To paraphrase a recent TV commercial, "What's a ~~mother~~ college to do?" The distinctions made here between PAT and CHRIS will come as no surprise to alert college personnel. But there are important implications which apply equally well to many college situations in which student action and interaction are visible. Both PAT and CHRIS will continue to stumble whenever faced with personal decisions. PAT will lurch toward the "pat" answer, the easy decision, without giving rational consideration to an analysis of all relevant factors and without considering the strength of alternate possibilities and choices. CHRIS, on the other hand, may lack the self discipline to resist being pulled in all directions at once, toward new experiences for the sake of new experiences, and decisions made may have little or no relationship to meaningful goals and purposes, which CHRIS finds difficult to discover or develop.

Figure 1

Mean Score Differences for Four-College Sample (female)
on OPI Scales

Christine, N=60
Patricia, N=34
Female Stays, N=284

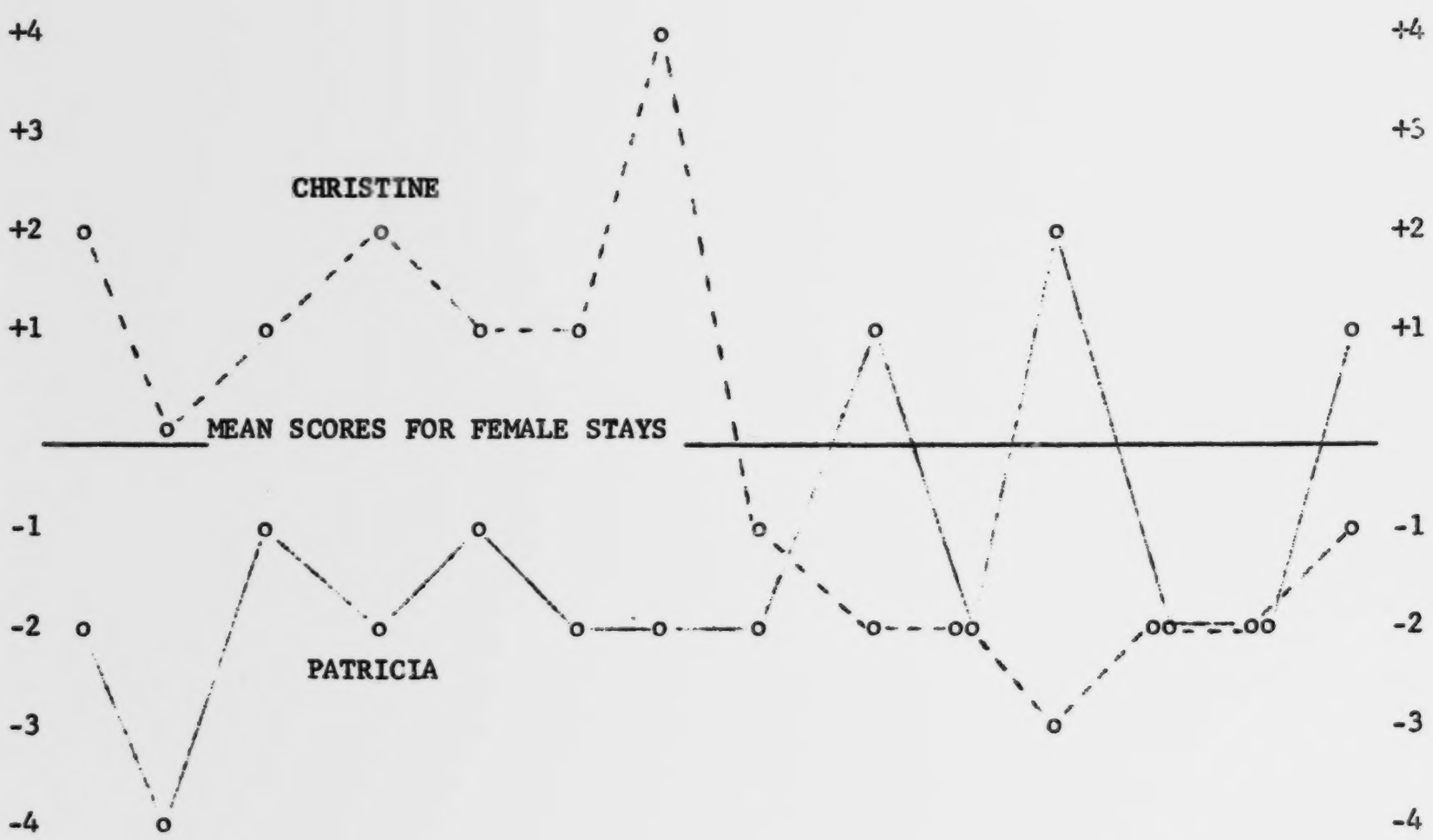


Figure 2

Mean Score Differences for Four-College Sample (male)
on OPI Scales

Christopher, N=50
Patrick, N=45
Male Stays, N=464

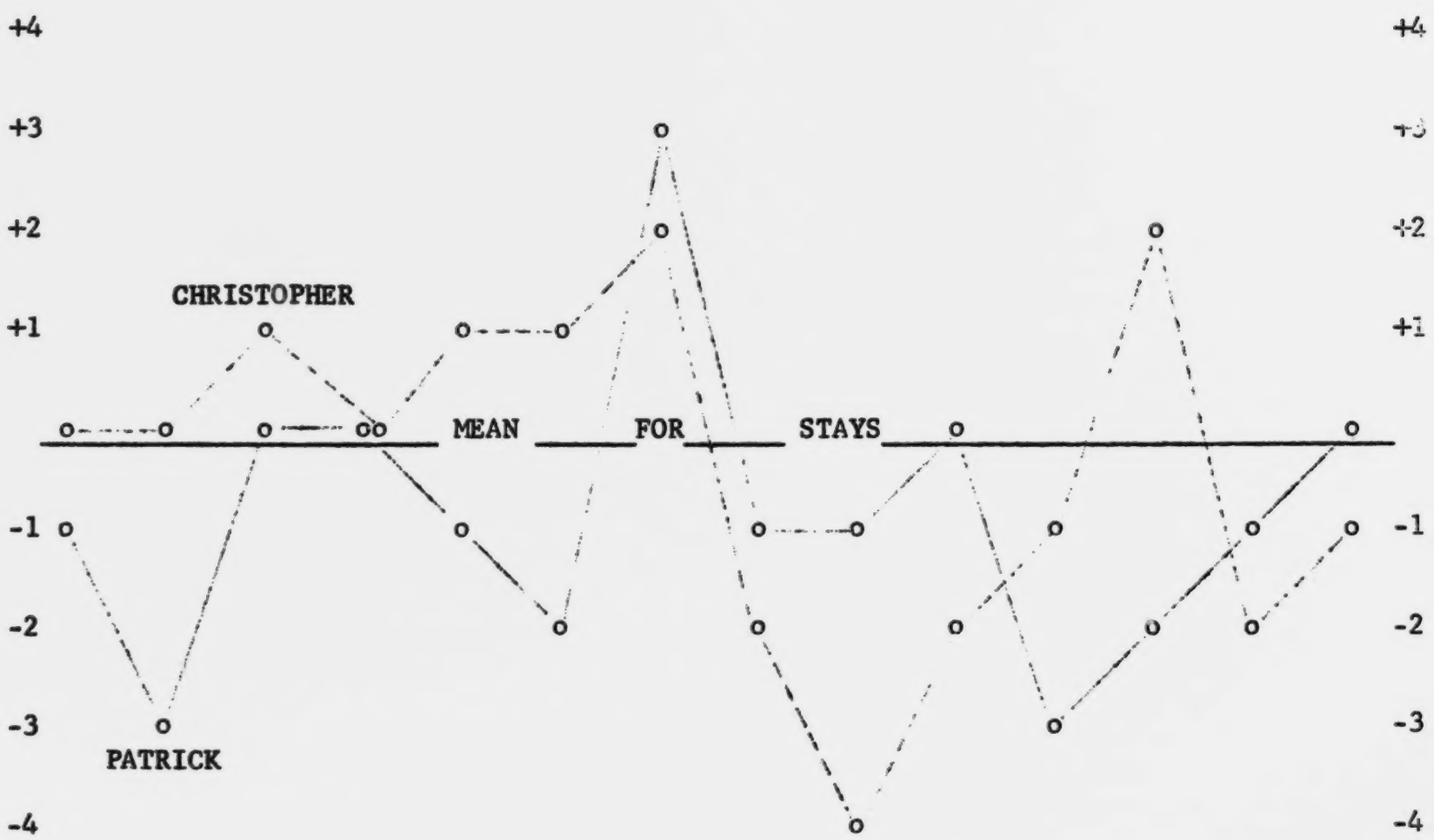


Figure 3

Mean Score Differences for Four-College Sample (female)
on Four OPI Scales

Christine, N=60
Patricia, N=34
Female Stays, N=284

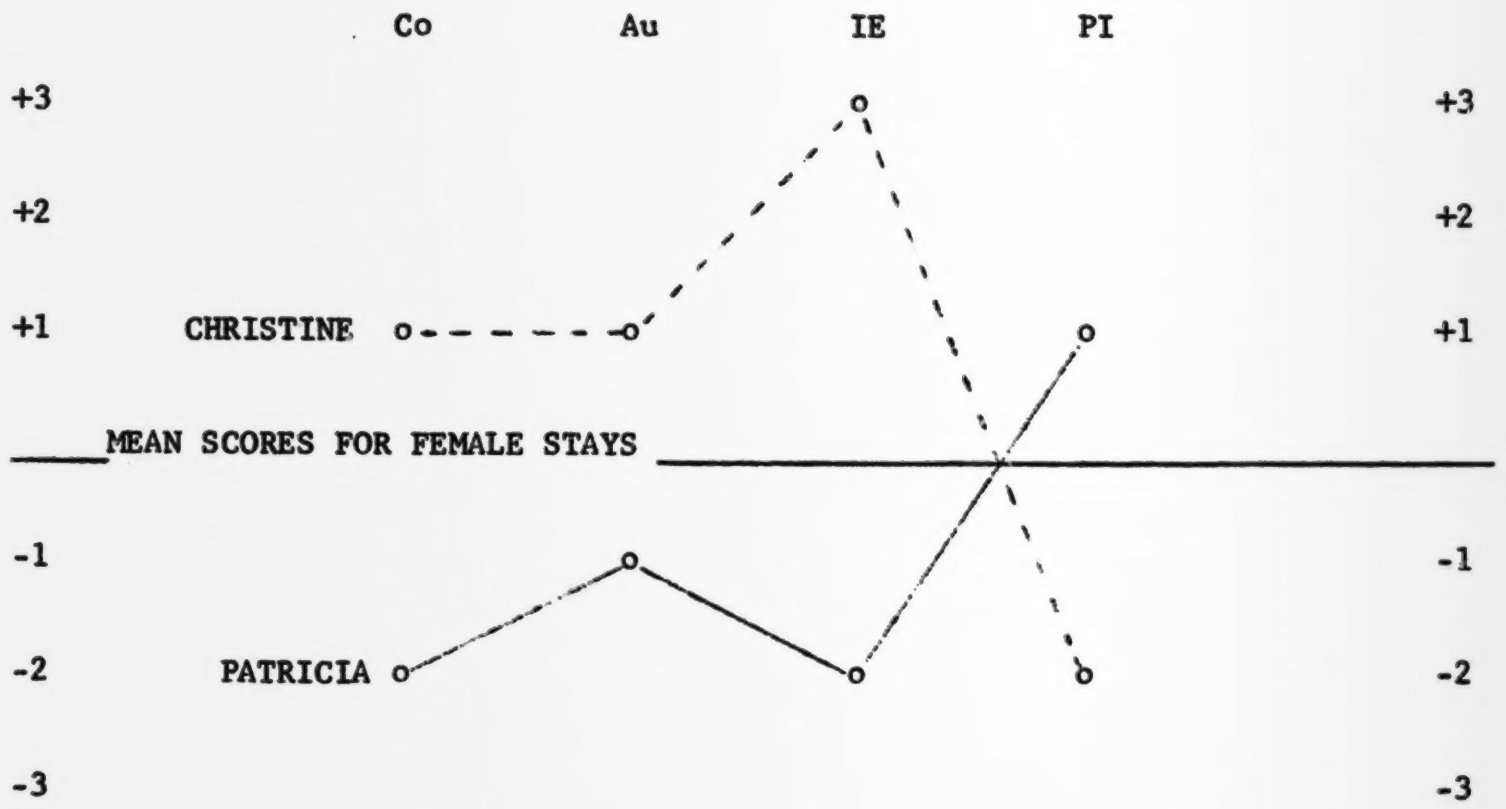
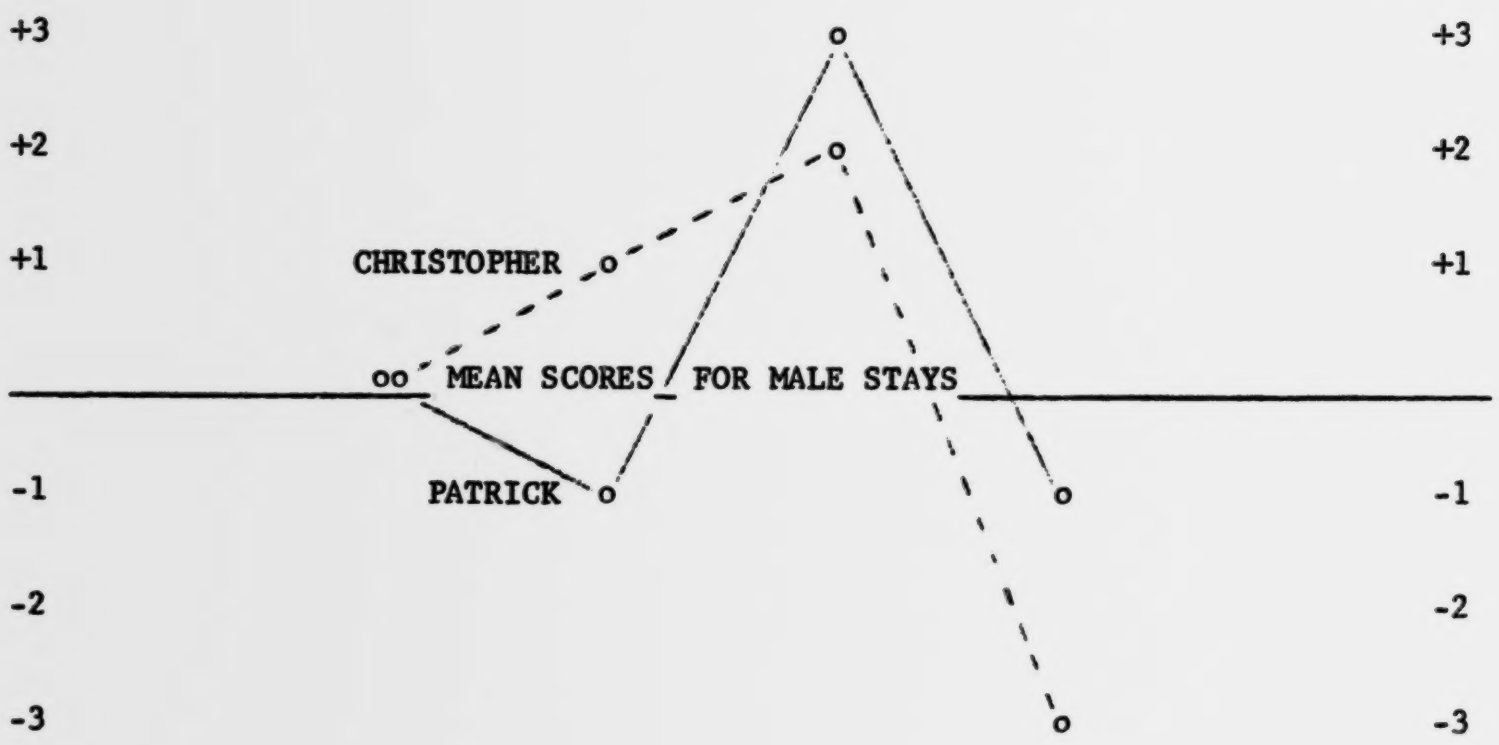


Figure 4

Mean Score Differences for Four-College Sample (male)
on Four OPI Scales

Christopher, N=50
Patrick, N=45
Male Stays, N=464



The range of institutional characteristics represented at Project colleges suggests that remedial services are available to PAT and CHRIS, although they vary considerably from college to college. However, when both groups show considerable visibility in the attrition study it suggests that the personalization of experience, acclaimed to be an advantage of small college life, has yet to be fully realized.

It will be helpful, we think, to take a closer look at each of the two students characterized in this report. By raising questions about how each may react to various components of the college experience, we may uncover new insights as to possible solutions or program improvements.

First consider CHRIS. When reported by the Dean as having dropped out, the typical response of both faculty and administration might be, "I'm not surprised. We just couldn't seem to reach that student." Although quite noticeable by some of the things he did and neglected to do, he seems difficult to understand. It is not always easy to predict what he will do next. He may be "moody"--aloof and detached one time, and highly animated another. College rules and regulations will generally be regarded with suspicion and/or resentment, seen as an imposition upon his rights to self determination. When self determination is available, it may lie fallow, waiting for a fertile idea to be implanted. He gravitates toward situations that permit full and open discussion of theoretical matters, and that allow independent work. If he studies, it will happen in areas of particular interest; uninteresting subjects will be avoided.

If the college experience should help CHRIS become more rational (and "liberated" through education), which institutional characteristic helps CHRIS add increments of self respect and goal direction--"personal integration," if you will? What academic procedures provide the best opportunities for examining rationally the variety of choices which CHRIS insists upon? If courses are "structured," how can CHRIS gain a feeling of participation and involvement; if "unstructured," how can external checks and balances be applied without becoming self-defeating? If grades are determined through external judgments, how can CHRIS be "included in" and be helped to gain a more realistic acceptance of his own achievements? In "no grade" or "self grading" situations, how can course goals and objectives be personalized so that CHRIS makes gains in his own personal goals and objectives?

CHRIS is not the kind of student who makes frequent visits to the counselor's office. Although some private thoughts will be shared with close friends, those with official titles may well be distrusted. What is the role, then, of student counselors and "intellectual stimulators" who are disassociated from regulatory duties? Do academic advisors and members of the faculty take an open or closed stance when it comes to such non-academic matters as the personal goals of seemingly disorganized and alienated students? Of all the theories (new or old) that stem from the vast body of psychological literature, which ones have the greatest applicability on any particular campus for the reduction of anxious and disturbed response patterns?

Helping CHRIS to get "un-hung" and "loosened up" is admittedly a highly complex and individualized matter and, in many cases, requires professional services unavailable on some campuses. However, the nature and scope of the college

program also makes its impact, favorably or unfavorably, upon the development of this student's rational behavior. CHRIS will search for and demand variety, either within the sanctioned program of the college or outside of it. The options provided to CHRIS at any given college must be planned and executed by that college with the same regard for rational and intelligent reasoning that we expect of CHRIS.

Now let's look at PAT, who is not nearly as "noticeable" as CHRIS. PAT tends to "fit in," to participate in the college program in such a way that attention is avoided. Here, the orientation is away from "exhibitionism" as an individual and toward support for the group, of which PAT is happy and pleased to be a member. At some colleges, PAT may be an indistinguishable part of the "silent majority." He will be alert and sensitive to "what others think," and personal attitudes will be subordinated to the "oughtitudes" developed through home, school, and church teachings. While CHRIS probably can shrug off criticism, PAT will try to avoid it at all costs.

PAT probably studies whether it "feels good" or not, and will appreciate structure in the academic program. When asked about progress made in a given course, PAT's response would carry the heavy imprint of the instructor's opinions. Learning situations that offer sets of complex choices could be very frustrating, even immobilizing. Whereas CHRIS would want to "explore" a problem, PAT would want to "solve it"--the RIGHT way.

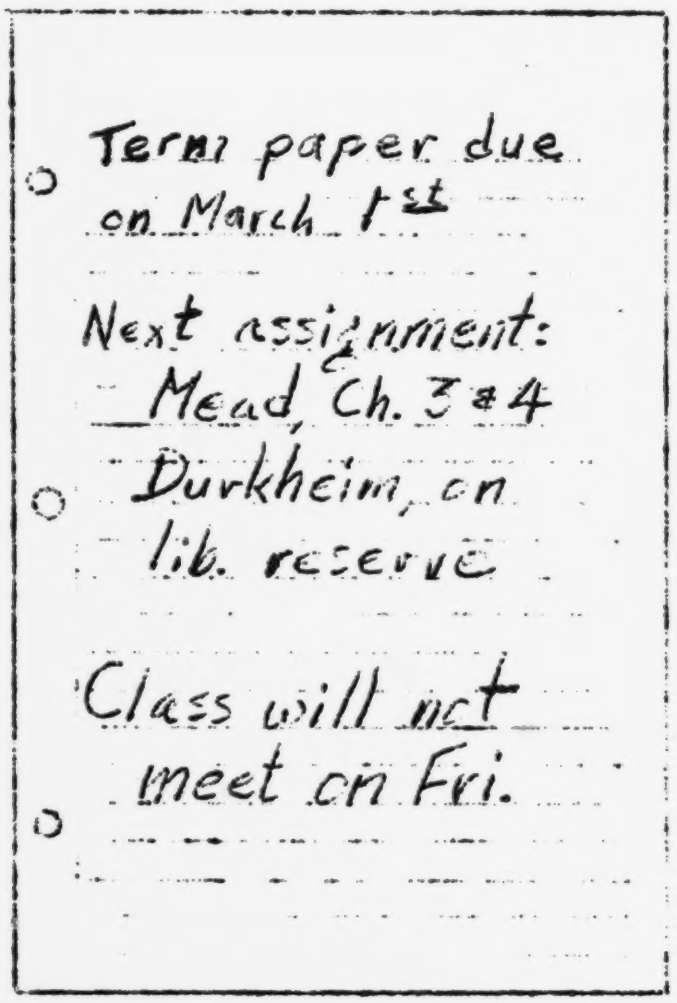
When PAT has a personal problem (this would occur most likely when discrepancies develop between performance and expectation), there will be little doubt but that the instructor, the counselor, the advisor will be sought out and listened to. If PAT has a chance to transfer to another college that appears to offer a reasonably secure situation, the decision will be made on the basis of "good sense"--not on "How do I solve this problem?" For it is not really a problem to PAT, and the college may respond to the fact of PAT's withdrawal with, "What happened? Why did we lose this student?"

Within the academic program, PAT provides a counter-point for CHRIS' dislike for structure. Thus, PAT may show what some would call excessive dependence upon the instructor's opinion, and may be reluctant to undertake independent study. While CHRIS may not feel "personally involved" in structured courses, PAT feels involved by virtue of attending class regularly, by taking adequate notes in class, and doing required readings. The question for PAT is how to shift responsibility for academic judgments from the professor's pedestal to the learner's logic and into the arena of open discussion and debate. PAT may not see controversy and difference of opinion as desirable or legitimate. CHRIS might argue that a "good" instructor should not ask a question to which he knows the "answer," and PAT would rebut that if he doesn't know the answer, he is not qualified to be an instructor. The delicate balance between the instructor's disciplinary competence and the student's emerging judgment can mean quite different things to these two types of students.

Whereas CHRIS may need to gain respect for the value of "outside" evaluation of "progress," PAT needs to gain experience with and confidence in "self" evaluation. PAT needs to learn how to function more effectively in complex situations with greater reliance upon inner resources and, again, a rather large

Variations on a Theme

CHRIS



PAT

body of psychological literature is available with suggestions on how such growth can be fostered. In implementing established theories, it must be remembered that PAT feels more secure in well-defined situations where what one "ought" to do is carefully spelled out by "authorities." The problem is how one authority (the college) can best go about providing opportunities for freeing the imagination, for experiencing the "thrill" of new experiences, and for lessening dependency upon others--all this without weakening feelings of belonging, of acceptance, of confidence that such experiences are "right."

Helping our PATs and CHRISs modify their decision-making machinery is admittedly a complex matter. Indeed, many a college catalog speaks eloquently of higher education as "learning how to learn" and "learning how to think" (notice the absence of "what"). While we cannot support the contentions of this paper with elaborate statistical evidence at this point, the issues they raise are important and fundamental.

In conclusion, then, a few observations:

1. There are PATs and CHRISs on all campuses.
2. The ratio will and does vary from college to college.
3. Colleges need to deal more effectively with both.

4. PAT and CHRIS need different experiences.

And the questions:
1. How can PAT be "opened up"?
2. How can CHRIS be "reached"?
3. Which kinds of experiences most forcefully ask PAT where he is going and give CHRIS a meaningful chance to test and clarify his interests?

We invite your reactions. How does the PAT-CHRIS distinction fit your experiences? What successes are you having in providing, or requiring, a variety of choices through which PAT can gain increased confidence in, and use of, his inner resources? What seems to be working at your institution to help CHRIS toward goals that add meaning and purpose to the use of the inner resources in which he already has confidence?

For those who are interested, the attached Appendices describe the techniques and data on which this report is based.

APPENDIX A

Procedures used in sub-group classifications

One of the instruments that has provided considerable information about the process of withdrawal is the Attrition Questionnaire (AQ), a six-page document mailed to each student reported by Project colleges as "withdrawn." The AQ contains both objective (structured) and subjective (essay) items, thus giving the withdrawee an opportunity to explain and qualify what actually took place in his own unique situation. It is not a perfect instrument, and some withdrawees who returned the questionnaire gave responses that were not as expressive as hoped. However, the AQ is regarded as a valid source of information concerning a wide variety of alternatives, influences, feelings and reactions surrounding the act of withdrawal as seen in retrospect by the withdrawee.

By studying a completed AQ, it is possible to see how a withdrawee describes the reasons for his withdrawal in objective or structured terms, to see whether or not his own words confirm or deny his structured responses, or to see whether his own words introduce other dynamics that influence our interpretation of his withdrawal. A study of this kind can reveal what seems to the interpreter to be the principal dynamic(s) most likely to have been dominant in the student's decision to withdraw.

On such judgments about principal withdrawal dynamics, PATs were designated as those cases in which:

a) the dynamic(s) suggested that the student saw few (if any) alternatives to withdrawal;
b) the dynamic(s) offered the college very little room (if any) in which to negotiate an alternate decision; and/or
c) neither the student nor the college had sufficient potential to control the course of events that led to withdrawal.

CHRISs were those cases described in converse terms. When the interpreter saw that the withdrawee expressed one reason or condition in his objective or structured response (e.g., lack of funds) and another in his own words (e.g., hostility, disappointment, conflict, etc.) it was decided that the latter would be taken as the more important of the two. The procedure, then, was heavily subjective in terms of the withdrawee's responses and in terms of the interpreter's judgment. However, remarkable consistency was achieved in each group: the precipitating factors for those classified as PAT were uniformly straightforward and essentially "external," while for CHRIS, the factors were consistently those of confusion, anxiety, and instability.

To check on the reliability of the above procedure and of the judgments, fifty AQs were independently sub-grouped into PAT and CHRIS categories by three interpreters. Agreement on these independent sub-groupings was approximately 90 percent, a level regarded as acceptable. In fact, we were pleased to find what seemed to be a workable procedure for identifying a dynamic that could be used to create sub-groups of withdrawees based on subjective evaluations. About one percent of the AQs examined were excluded because of difficulties in classification.

Description of the sample

One hundred eighty nine cases were divided into PAT and CHRIS categories, using total returns from four colleges, as follows:

College	Number of AQ Responses: Male	Female	Total
Earlham	23	19	42
Goddard	14	22	36
Messiah	16	35	51
Salem	42	18	60
Totals:	95	94	189

These selections provided a sample of sufficient size (approximately 25 percent) and also provided variety among the four colleges. The grouping procedure, yielded the following distribution:

		Totals
Patricia	34	
Patrick	45	
		79
Christine	60	
Christopher	50	
		110
Totals:	189	189

New OPI scale means were computed for the total drop and stay cases at the four colleges, plus means for the four sub-groups listed immediately above.

To make generalization possible, it was necessary to check the similarity of the sample and the total population. Male drops from the four-college sample had scale means identical to those of the total male drop on five of the fourteen OPI scales (Es, Co, RO, SE, and MF); they differed by one point on eight scales (TI, TO, IE, PI, Al, Am, RB, and PO); and they differed by two points on one scale (Au).

Female drops from the four-college sample were identical to the total female drop on four scales (SE, Am, RB, and PO); they differed by one point on eight (TI, TO, Es, Co, Au, PI, Al, and MF); they differed by two points on one (IE) and by three points on one (RO). By inspection we concluded that except for the female differences on RO, the four-college sample was reasonably "representative" of all Project drop outs.

Findings

Table 1 shows mean scores obtained for the four-college sample on which this report is based. Figures 1-4 are derived from scale differences computed from figures in this table.

What appeared to be "major findings" have been discussed in the main body of this report. If future work expands the size of the sample, perhaps additional observations may be made about other scale differences, patterns at individual colleges, and the like. For now, such work has been tabled sine die.

Appendix B

Table 1

OPI Scale Means for Four-College Sample

		Four-College Sample									
		Female					Male				
Scale	N =	Stay 284	Drop 194	AQ Drop 94	Patricia 34	Christine 60	Stay 464	Drop 371	AQ Drop 95	Patrick 45	Christopher 50
TI		49	49	49	47	51	47	44	47	46	47
TO		45	45	44	41	45	48	46	47	45	48
ES		53	53	53	52	54	47	46	48	47	48
CO		50	51	50	48	52	51	50	51	51	51
AU		50	49	50	49	51	49	46	50	48	50
RO		49	50	49	47	50	51	50	51	49	52
IE		47	51	48	45	51	55	57	57	58	57
SE		48	48	46	46	47	48	48	46	47	46
PI		48	47	47	49	46	49	47	47	48	45
AL		47	46	45	45	45	48	47	47	48	46
AM		53	51	52	55	50	47	44	45	44	46
MF		43	42	41	41	41	54	55	54	52	56
RB		46	44	44	44	44	46	44	45	45	44
PO		50	51	50	51	49	52	54	51	52	51

Read Table thus: For <u>females</u>, 284 students who entered Earlham, Goddard, Messiah, and Salem colleges were still enrolled at the end of their second year; 194 students had withdrawn, of whom 94 returned the Attrition Questionnaire; 34 were classified as "Patricia," 60 as "Christine:" mean scale scores for each group are read from the appropriate column.